

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed October 23, 2003 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claims 9-11 are canceled. Claims 1, 8, 12, 14, 16, and 17 have been amended. Claims 1-10 and 12-17 are pending in this application, with claims 1, 8, 12, 14, 16, and 17 being the only independent claims. Reconsideration of the above-identified application, as herein amended and in view of the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action mailed October 23, 2003, claims 1-2, 4, and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as obvious over Kobler in view of Tittgemeyer and further in view of Johnson or Dupree.


The remainder of the claims 3, 5, 7-10 and 12-17 are rejected for the same reasons as independent claim 1 in view of various other references.

Claim 11 was found to contain allowable subject matter. In view of the allowable subject matter, the limitations of claim 11 have been incorporated into each of the independent claims 1, 8, 12, 14, 16, and 17. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1, 8, 12, 14, 16, and 17 are allowable.

Dependent claims 2-7, 13, and 15, each being dependent on one of independent claims 1, 8, 12, 14, 16, and 17, are deemed allowable for the same reasons expressed above with respect to independent claims 1, 8, 12, 14, 16, and 17.

The application is now deemed to be in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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